

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A nut member configured to be engaged within a cage member and configured to receive a fastener, said nut member comprising:

a base portion having an upper surface, a lower surface, and ~~sidewalls~~ at least one sidewall which ~~connect~~ connects said upper surface to said lower surface, said base portion further having at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off extending outwardly from said lower surface thereof, said at least one stand-off is configured to allow for a reduced amount of bearing surface interface between said nut member and the cage member prior to said nut member receiving the fastener, said at least one stand-off is further configured to be embedded into the cage member upon said nut member receiving the fastener, said base portion having an aperture which extends therethrough for receiving the fastener.

2. (Currently amended) A nut member as defined in claim 1, wherein said base portion has four ~~protrusions~~ stand-offs extending from said lower surface thereof.

3. (Currently amended) A nut member as defined in claim 1, wherein said at least one sidewall defines two sidewalls which are configured to meet to define a corner of said lower surface, said at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off is provided at ~~a corner~~ said corner of said lower surface ~~where at least one of said sidewalls meets at said lower surface.~~

4. (Currently amended) A nut member as defined in claim 3, wherein said base portion has four sidewalls to define four corners of said lower surface, and four ~~protrusions~~ stand-offs extending from said lower surface such that each ~~protrusion~~ stand-off extends from one of said four corners of said lower surface.
5. (Currently amended) A nut member as defined in claim 3, wherein said at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off extends to a point.
6. (Currently amended) A nut member as defined in claim 3, wherein said at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off is in the form of a tetrahedron.
7. (Currently amended) A nut member as defined in claim 1, wherein said at least one sidewall defines two sidewalls which are configured to meet to define a corner of said lower surface, said at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off extends at least a portion of a distance between said aperture and ~~a corner~~ said corner of said lower surface ~~where two of said sidewalls meet~~ at said lower surface.
8. (Currently amended) A nut member as defined in claim 7, wherein said base portion has four sidewalls to define four corners of said lower surface, and four ~~protrusions~~ stand-offs extending from said lower surface such that each ~~protrusion~~ stand-off extends at least a portion of a distance between said aperture and one of said four corners of said lower surface.
9. (Cancelled).

10. (Currently amended) A nut member as defined in claim 7, wherein said at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off is in the form of a rounded bead.

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Original) A nut member as defined in claim 1, further comprising a cylindrical portion extending from said upper surface of said base portion.

13. (Original) A nut member as defined in claim 12, wherein said aperture of said base portion extends into said cylindrical portion.

14. (Currently amended) An assembly configured to receive a fastener, said assembly comprising:

a nut member having a base portion having an upper surface, a lower surface, and ~~sidewalls~~ at least one sidewall which ~~connect~~ connects said upper surface to said lower surface, said base portion further having at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off extending outwardly from said lower surface thereof, said base portion having an aperture which extends therethrough for receiving the fastener; and

~~means~~ a cage member for encaging said nut member, said ~~encaging means~~ cage member is configured to provide a limited range of movement of said nut member in at least one dimension, said ~~encaging means~~ cage member is configured to allow access to said aperture of said nut member within the limited range of movement of said nut member provided by said ~~encaging means~~ cage member, said at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off of said nut member is configured to allow for a reduced amount of bearing surface interface between said nut member and being in contact with said encaging means cage member prior to said nut member receiving the fastener, said at least one stand-off of said nut member is further configured to be embedded into said cage member upon said nut member receiving the fastener.

15. (Currently amended) An assembly as defined in claim 14, wherein said base portion of said nut member has four ~~protrusions~~ stand-offs extending from said lower surface thereof.

16. (Currently amended) An assembly as defined in claim 14, wherein said at least one sidewall defines two sidewalls which are configured to meet to define a corner of said lower surface, said at least one protrusion stand-off is provided at ~~a corner~~ said corner of said lower surface ~~where at least one of said sidewalls meets at said lower surface.~~

17. (Currently amended) An assembly as defined in claim 14, wherein said at least one sidewall defines two sidewalls which are configured to meet to define a corner of said lower surface, said at least one protrusion stand-off extends at least a portion of a distance between said aperture and ~~a corner~~ said corner of said lower surface ~~where at least one of said sidewalls meets at said lower surface.~~

18. (Cancelled).

19. (Currently amended) An assembly as defined in claim 14, wherein said ~~encaging means~~ cage member is configured to be welded to a workpiece such that ~~an e-coat or ELPO bath~~ a bath can be applied to said ~~encaging means~~ cage member and said workpiece, said at least one protrusion stand-off assisting in preventing said nut member from being stuck to said ~~encaging means~~ cage member after said ~~e-coat or ELPO bath~~ being is applied thereto.

20. (Currently amended) A combination nut member, cage member and fastener configured for interaction with a workpiece having first and second surfaces and an aperture provided therethrough, said combination comprising:

a nut member having a base portion having an upper surface, a lower surface, and at least one sidewall ~~sidewalls~~ which ~~connect~~ connects said upper surface to said lower surface, said base portion further having at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off extending from said lower surface thereof, said base portion having an aperture which extends therethrough, said aperture defining a threaded wall;

a cage member which is associated with said first surface of said workpiece, said cage member having an opening therethrough, said nut member being encaged within said cage member, said at least one ~~protrusion~~ stand-off of said nut member being embedded into said cage member; and

a fastener having an enlarged head portion and an elongated threaded shank extending therefrom, said enlarged head portion being associated with said second surface of said workpiece, said elongated shank extending through said aperture of said workpiece and being in threaded engagement with said threaded wall of said nut member.

21. (Original) A combination as defined in claim 20, wherein said cage member is welded to said first surface of said workpiece.

22. (Original) A combination as defined in claim 20, wherein said lower surface of said base portion of said nut member is substantially positioned against said cage member.

23. (Currently amended) A combination as defined in claim 20, wherein said at least one sidewall defines two sidewalls which are configured to meet to define a corner of said lower surface, said at least one protrusion stand-off is provided at ~~a corner~~ said corner of said lower surface ~~where at least one of said sidewalls meets at said lower surface.~~

24. (Currently amended) A combination as defined in claim 20, wherein said at least one sidewall defines two sidewalls which are configured to meet to define a corner of said lower surface, said at least one protrusion stand-off extends at least a portion of a distance between said aperture and ~~a corner~~ said corner of said lower surface ~~where at least one of said sidewalls meets at said lower surface.~~

25. (New) A nut member as defined in claim 1, wherein said nut member is formed of a material which is harder than a material from which the cage member is formed such that said at least one stand-off of said nut member may be embedded into the cage member upon said nut member receiving the fastener.

26. (New) An assembly as defined in claim 14, wherein said nut member is formed of a material which is harder than a material from which said cage member is formed such that said at least one stand-off of said nut member may be embedded into said cage member upon said nut member receiving the fastener.

27. (New) A combination as defined in claim 21, wherein said nut member is formed of a material which is harder than a material from which said cage member is formed such that said at least one stand-off of said nut member may be embedded into said cage member.